



# Communi<sup>i</sup>que

INS

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*In the Air Over South Texas*

## Proposed Restructuring Would

### BUILD ON PAST SUCCESSSES

Continuing the restructuring begun following Commissioner Meissner's arrival at INS over three years ago, a second phase of management and organizational moves has been proposed to strengthen and build upon the success of the past.

*"Our reforms must go further if we are to improve accountability, performance, and professionalism."*

— Commissioner Doris Meissner

The first step in the proposed restructuring—which was announced internally a few months ago and has been submitted for approval to both the Justice Department and the Office of Management and Budget before submission to Congress—involves a realignment designed to strengthen the regional management level by transferring responsibility for the eastern, southern, and western administrative centers to the respective regional directors. The goal is to consolidate the range of authorities required by the regions to assist field managers and to give the regions greater spending and hiring flexibility.

Next, the Headquarters Office of Field Operations would be strengthened by increasing the authority and accountability of the regional directors and transferring responsibility for INS' four service centers, phone centers, and forms centers to the office's executive associate commissioner (EAC). In addition, Field Operations would be responsible for managing the Intelligence program, and the Border Patrol would be permanently assigned to the office as well, with the Chief of the Border Patrol serving as a deputy to the EAC. Each of these moves is expected to "facilitate the flow of operationally sensitive intelligence information to the field," according to the Commissioner,

"and give regional directors, district directors, and sector chiefs the [ability] to respond quickly to shifting enforcement needs and developing new trends."

In addition, to help clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Headquarters Offices of Programs and Policy and Planning, the two offices would be consolidated and the name changed to the "Office of Policy and Programs." This new office would be restructured to contain branches including a Border Management unit that would help integrate the design of activities taking place along the border, an Enforcement Programs unit, and a Status Verification unit.

Finally, the Office of Management would essentially remain unchanged, with main program units including Budget, Administration, Finance, Security, Human Resources and Development, Records Management, Information Resources Management, and EEO.

**New Senior Appointments.** In addition, several key personnel changes have been made to "ensure a strong basis for transition to the larger reorganization proposal," according to the Commissioner's statement.

In the first of these moves, Brian R. Perryman, who was the district director in Chicago, IL, was detailed to replace J. Scott Blackman as acting executive associate commissioner for Field Operations effective May 15. Blackman returned to his job as district director in Philadelphia, PA, a position he has held since 1992. In addition, Mary Ann Gantner, the deputy district director in New York, was assigned to Headquarters to assist with naturalization activities effective April 28. And Joseph D. Cuddihy, the district director in Rome, moved to Headquarters effective May 5 to fill the position of acting associate commissioner for Field Operations. On the same day, Joseph R. Greene, district director in Denver, CO, arrived at Headquarters to manage enforcement activities in the Office of Field Operations.

**Strengthening the Chain of Command.** According to the Commissioner, the proposed restructuring is intended to "fundamentally strengthen the field's chain of command, provide clearer direction and

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# INS Communique

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Travelers on their way to Mexico approach the international bridge at the Pharr port of entry within south Texas' Harlingen district. (Photo for INS by Bill Powers)

## SOUTH TEXAS: INS' NEW FOCUS FOR ENHANCED OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT

### *A Snapshot of the McAllen Sector and Harlingen District*

Joe Garza has Texas written all over him, and there is more. Beneath his easygoing manner lies the diligence and professionalism gained from 28 years in the U.S. Border

Patrol. When he speaks, he expresses the compassion of one who cares about the people he comes in contact with.

When Garza talks about sector operations in McAllen, TX, where he has been the chief patrol agent since 1995, he doesn't start with the new resources the sector is getting or the number of agents in the sector's field. He talks about the plight of illegal immigrants flooding into south Texas each month.

"It's a different world down here," Garza begins. "There's so much opportunity on this side of the river and such limited opportunity on the other side that every day we realize how fortunate we are to have been born on this side of the border." On the other side, he continues, "they risk everything to avail themselves of what we sometimes take for granted."

This is something he hopes his agents understand well—something he strives to teach them so they can do their jobs better.

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McAllen Sector Chief Joe Garza (photo for the INS by Bill Powers)

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Harlingen District Director Mike Trominski and McAllen Sector Chief Joe Garza

## INSpect Visit to McAllen a 'Service Partnership'

During the first two weeks of June it was business as usual for the McAllen sector's 500-plus Border Patrol agents, and a whole lot more.

It was the time 45 members of the Service's INSpect team visited McAllen and conducted a comprehensive top-to-bottom, inside-and-out review of all functional units.

The team, formally known as the INS Program for Excellence and Comprehensive Tracking, is staffed by employees from a cross-section of Service offices. It is a component of the Office of Internal Audit. This was the INSpect team's eighth field visit nationwide since its inception last year.

The focus of the visit, team leader Carolyn McGee said, was to ensure the work of the sector is being accomplished effectively, that applicable laws are being followed, that performance measures are being met, and that innovative activities are being given the recognition they deserve.

"One of the most important things about INSpect is that it is a partnership," McGee told the sector's officers during the PAIC meeting on the first day of the team's visit. "This is a nonadversarial situation. We can learn from you, and hopefully you can learn from us." The review, she said, is designed to "provide us with a better view of how things are working. It's a holistic, standardized approach using the guidelines that have been developed by our subject matter experts."

As McGee spoke, members of her team, who had spent two days preparing to go on-site, were at each of the sector's stations reviewing internal documents, conducting interviews, and gathering information for a preliminary report on program operations. This report was given to the sector before the team left. A follow-up report issued later will track corrections of any problems identified.

A status meeting with the sector's officers was part of the assessment. McGee said the INSpect team welcomes all programs' comments on its findings. An exit brief is always conducted before the team leaves a site.

"When we leave here," McGee said, "you will know exactly what's going to be in the report. We want this to be... I won't say a pleasurable...but a positive experience for you."



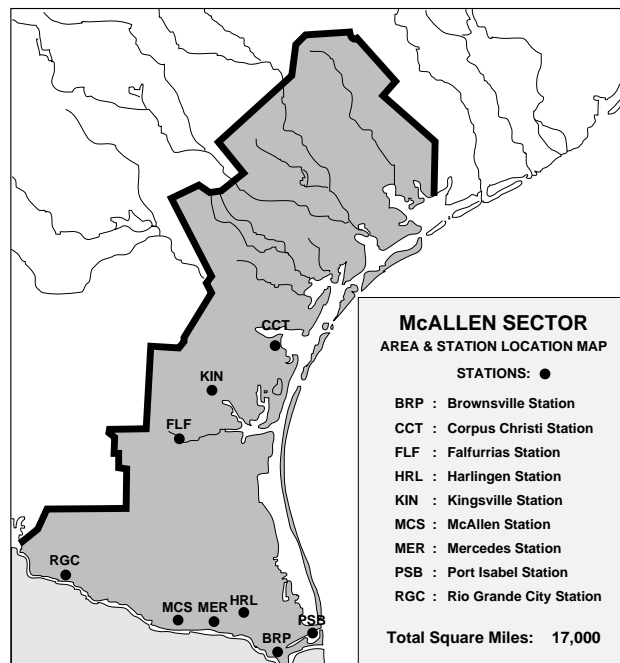
Sarah Jones, New York, NY, district office (l.), and Christina Gooding, Headquarters Office of Internal Audit, prepare for a two-week evaluation of the activities of the McAllen, TX, Border Patrol sector.

## SOUTH TEXAS

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**Sector Operations.** The McAllen sector is large, running from the tip of south Texas to Corpus Christi in the north, covering 17,000 square miles of territory and 284 miles of twisting, turning Rio Grande River. Last year its agents handled 18 percent of all illegal immigrant traffic on the Southwest border, apprehended more than half of all illegal "Other than Mexicans" (OTMs), and seized a third of all marijuana found coming across the border.

"This is not something that one person did, so tell your guys I'm proud of them," Garza told his station PAICs during their June monthly meeting in McAllen. "I know your efforts are being recognized, and this can be seen by the 69 additional new agents we will be getting by the end of the fiscal year." The total number of agents in the field by that time will be 729, a 42 percent increase over last year and an 89 percent increase since FY94, illustrating the Service's commitment to strengthening the Texas border.





During the monthly PAIC meeting at headquarters, Chief Joe Garza (second from r.) briefs station chiefs on sector business. Also shown are (l. to r.) ACPA Rey Garza, DCPA Perry Cronin, ACPA Juan García, and ACPA Steve Hill.

"It's obvious that both Headquarters and Congress recognize the need for additional resources in south Texas," Garza says, "specifically in McAllen. This is part of the national strategy developed in 1994. We agreed then that we would work to build on the success of Operation Hold the Line. San Diego was strengthened and Tucson was strengthened. We are now ready to make a significant impact in south Texas."

"Our concern," Garza continues, "is that our experience level is falling. In the McAllen sector, nearly half of our agents have less than five years of experience. Still, as I told the Commissioner, 'What a wonderful problem to have—to have all of these new agents to train.'"

Chief Garza's message is summarized in his closing at the monthly PAIC meeting: "1997's focus is on Texas. There will be more hiring next year, and I don't see illegal immigration falling off in the McAllen sector. So I need strong leadership out there telling our agents that there is a responsibility that comes with wearing the bars and eagles."

**New Resources, Coordinated Efforts.** Many of the Service's new Border Patrol resources are going to south Texas. In addition to personnel increases (228 new agents will arrive in McAllen alone in FY97), the sector has already received more than 100 new vehicles, an expanded radio operations center, and enhanced equipment such as infrared air capabilities and night vision scopes.

There is a continued recognition that the Border Patrol is not fighting the illegal immi-

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## Drug Smuggling: New Methods Complicate an Old Problem

It was just another boxcar on yet another train on another hot summer Texas day. Part of the train that pulled into the McAllen sector after crossing the border through Brownsville, TX, had originated in Guadalajara, Mexico. The boxcar was being routinely searched for illegal aliens who might be suffering from heat exposure. Nothing unusual.

Until suddenly, one of the K-9s alerted agents and led them to the boxcar's back wall. Routine ended here.



A McAllen sector Border Patrol agent unloads marijuana bales found hidden in the false wall of a boxcar. (Photo for INS by Bill Powers)

The back wall of the car was hollow and the space was filled with bundles of marijuana. Minutes later, the K-9 again alerted agents, this time to the front wall of the car. Another hollow compartment was filled with bundles of drugs. When the boxcar was dismantled with a blowtorch, the find was 200 bundles of marijuana weighing nearly 5,000 pounds and valued at \$3.7 million.

Early the next month, the scene was different but the story was the same. A tour bus was stopped at the Sarita checkpoint. Again the K-9s alerted

agents and led them to the interior compartment. Agents found drug bundles hidden in air conditioning vents running the entire length of the bus, directly over the passengers' heads. The find this time: 77 bundles of marijuana weighing 240 pounds, worth nearly \$200,000.

The moral of the story: as smugglers invent new ways to move drugs, Border Patrol agents will have to invent new ways to catch them. That's as routine as it gets.



Within the sector, K-9s are essential to identifying the location of smuggled drugs. (Photo for INS by Bill Powers)

## AirOps: McAllen Sector's Eyes in the Sky

James D. King wears a flight jacket. He flies a helicopter. And when night falls, he can see in the dark.

From the pilot's seat King controls a forward-looking infrared unit attached to the side of the helicopter to detect residual heat from objects on the ground. Their location is displayed with a marker on an LCD screen in the cockpit.

If King sees a group of moving markers on the LCD screen, it's likely to be illegal aliens, because King is patrol agent in charge of the McAllen sector's Air Operations unit, and he is out looking for them. If the object he sees on the LCD is standing still, it may be a warm truck engine or a boulder still emitting heat absorbed during the day.

Using infrared sensors and low-light night vision goggles, King and the unit's five journeymen pilots with four helicopters, a small fixed-wing aircraft, a Cessna, and a Piper cub helped apprehend nearly five percent of all the illegal aliens caught in the sector last year. In the first eight months of FY97, they helped the sector catch another 180,000 illegal entrants.

"Our focus hasn't changed [with the new technology]," says King. "It's still on the smuggling route from Brownsville to Corpus Christi." The night vision and infrared equipment have become invaluable, he says, because "it's a boon to everybody if I can fly at night like I do in the daytime."

The success of the air unit has its personal price. "Now that [the sector] knows we can fly [with infrared] at night, that's what they want us to do," King said. Even if he does get the two new helicopters that the unit has been promised—which will reduce down-time due to repairs—without additional personnel, it would be difficult to increase the unit's 90 hour of night flight and 500 hours of total time in the air each month.

King recognizes the importance of AirOps to the sector. He and his pilots are dedicated to continuing to meet the high standards set over the past year. King and the pilots are not the only ones to recognize the unit's value. As Kingsville, PAIC Fred Borrego says: "Without them, we wouldn't be able to do our job."

As Sector Air Operations Chief Patrol Agent James D. King looks on, Michael Eberman and Greg Price (behind King) clean the blade grips of 086 helicopters which have been removed for inspection. (Photo for INS by Bill Powers)



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gration battle alone. The sector works closely with State and local law enforcement agencies, constantly striving to build the trust needed to ensure successful joint operations.

Sector representatives attend monthly meetings of the Rio Grande Valley Law Enforcement Police Chiefs Association, where issues range from border violence to probation issues and police scholarships. Members of McAllen's city police force, State Department of Public Safety, and Cameron County Sheriff Omar Lucio attended the June meeting held at the sector.

Garza says he strives for such coordinated efforts because, "We want to expand the level of communication and identify other issues of concern. Working with other law enforcement agencies helps me do my job."

Sheriff Lucio agrees: "It's extremely important that we work together. We're encountering virtually the same problems. If people cross the border and they are hungry, for example, they are more likely to commit burglaries."

The sector's cooperative efforts extend to other INS offices. McAllen works closely with the Harlingen district to coordinate operations. Garza, a long-time friend of District Director Mike Trominski, offers an example: when the sector needs extra buses for transporting detainees, it works with the district to obtain them.

Deputy District Director Alphonso DeLeon says, "Mike and Joe get along fabulously. There is a constant exchange of information and they are always looking out for one another and giving each other a heads-up when something is happening. This is one immigration service, and that's how I would characterize it down here."

Trominski concurs, "Working with the Border Patrol is basically what we do to accomplish the Service's mission. Each of the operation's programs affects the others and depends on the others. We're all on the same team, working for the same agency, and having a good time doing it together."

**Community Outreach.** While the sector is constantly working to apprehend aliens illegally crossing the border, Garza says community outreach activities are similarly high on his agenda. Only through continued open communication, he says, will the public understand and be receptive to the Border Patrol's work in south Texas.

"I believe in the importance of having a knowledgeable community," he says emphatically. "We're doing a lot of positive things that people should know about. We need community support, and the way you get that support is by being a part of your community."

Perhaps foremost among these outreach activities is 'Head of the Class,' a program to regularly recognize students with outstanding academic records. Garza began the program in 1990 in Laredo, where he was chief patrol agent for nine years before coming to McAllen. Since Garza came to McAllen, the sector has presented 80 students with award certificates signifying their academic achievement and encouraging them to continue their good work.

"The program is a winner in all respects," Garza says. "The students get recognized for being role models, the school gets recognized, and the teacher gets recognized. And no one has ever objected to recognition."

Competition for the Border Patrol commendation is vigorous both within and between schools. It's also a winner for the Border Patrol, Garza says. "It gets me into the schools and allows us to meet the administration and the future student leaders."

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## **17,000 Square Miles of Territory, 284 Miles of River, Five Phones**

The calls go out from the sector's radio operations command center as if in code: "31-2, which sensor...15, 16, 17 hits...x-ray 435 port 2, three hits..." Hermelinda Garza, a law enforcement communications assistant (LECA) with the sector for just one year, already knows the cryptic language.

She has to. Tonight, with one other LECA and a supervisor, she is the communications link to the sector's 200 agents in the field. She must alert the agents to "hits" on the more than 500 sensors along 284 miles of river and 17,000 square miles of desolate territory.

A sensor hit (or frequently multiple hits) is relayed to the sector command center, then Garza calls agents near the hit, alerting them to the triggered sensor and the number of hits. The Intelligent Computer Assisted Detection (ICAD) system generates an electronic ticket that records the hit and any apprehensions made. All data is stored for later analysis.

Garza's shift begins at 4 p.m. and continues to midnight. About 5 p.m. she starts to eat a bag dinner between the constant sensor hits and her alerts to the field. Some tickets are closed quickly, others remain open for hours before being closed. The number of apprehensions mounts. Her code-like messages to agents continue: "X-ray 154, total of two...3105-960... 16-4, port 21, still coming in...total of 30 hits..."

Another busy night on the border.



The sector's new radio operations command center keeps headquarters in constant touch with agents in the field. (Photo for INS by Bill Powers)



Chief Joe Garza presents a "Head of the Class" award to a local student.

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Garza is equally supportive of the sector's Operation Lifesaver, a program where the Border Patrol alerts the public to life-threatening dangers of illegally crossing the border in the Texas heat; Border Patrol vehicles are equipped with stretchers and extra water; and agents distribute cards with a toll-free number that aliens—or anyone who sees an alien in danger—can call for emergency help. The sector's program saved more than 30 people last year.

**The Harlingen District.** INS' southern-most Texas district is about 45 minutes east of McAllen on I-83 in the heart of Cameron County in Harlingen, a small city of nearly 50,000 people.

The district, with about 100 employees, is not the largest in the United States, but it ranks among the busiest in two important categories: border traffic and

criminal and noncriminal alien detentions. The office also conducts all routine business performed by every INS district—accepting naturalization applications and processing status adjustment requests.

The Service's most recent key indicators show that Harlingen's ports are the third-busiest in the nation,

behind San Diego and San Antonio, with nearly 40 million inspections annually. In INS detentions, the district ranked third nationwide, behind San Diego and Phoenix, with 8,000 aliens detained in the first eight months of FY97.

With this tremendous workload and resultant growth in personnel and other resources, Trominski says the process cannot move fast enough for him. "I want to get all of my people on-board and trained," he says. "I'd like all of the new construction finished and all the new computer systems in place [as soon as possible]. My greatest challenge right now would be impatience."

It is Harlingen's capability to manage this growth despite an ever-increasing workload that makes it a good case study for the Service. Nowhere are the results of this capability clearer than at the Port



Female detainees at the Port Isabel SPC walk past the male dormitory on their way to a meal. (Photo for INS by Bill Powers)



These former dormitories for INS officer trainees, now SPC buildings, can house more than 400 criminal and noncriminal aliens.

Isabel Service Processing Center and the district's ports of entry (POEs).

**The Port Isabel SPC.** Contrary to its name, INS' Port Isabel Service Processing Center (SPC) is nowhere near Port Isabel. Without a map and good directions from a local, in fact, it is possible not to find it at all. The remote facility swelters in 100-degree-plus summer heat, amidst the cacti near Bayview, TX, 10 miles west of South Padre Island, but far enough away on twisting highways to make the beach a distant memory.

The facility, which typically houses more than 400 (it has space for 520) male and female criminal and noncriminal aliens, is one of 10 SPCs operated by INS (others are operated by contractors). It is staffed by 80 detention officers, nine deportation officers, four garage workers, and 60 contract guards. The buildings, transferred to INS in 1960, first were used as a training facility for Service officers. In 1977, when the training functions were transferred to other INS sites, it was converted to an alien detention facility. It is a self-contained community with dormitories, recreation areas, meal facilities, medical center, and fire station.

"The purpose is to detain people who are likely to abscond," according to SPC Director Cecilio Ruiz Jr. "Under the new immigration law, we are detaining anyone who enters illegally. That means anyone who violates immigration law, even if we know they are inadmissible, is detained until given a hearing." This does not apply to aliens who do not want a hearing and voluntarily return to their home country. However, because some detainees come from such distant countries as Russia, Pakistan,

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## Port Isabel SPC Increases In-processing Efficiency

On a typical day in early June, 383 male alien detainees were listed on the Port Isabel Service Processing Center's morning report. That means 95 INS SPC personnel were housing, feeding, monitoring, and providing medical care for these detainees and a small female population at the SPC. They also were transferring or releasing 16 detainees and processing the initial admissions of 24 others. And while it was busy, it wasn't as hectic as it used to be before recent technology improvements.

Through the SPC's new computerized system, the in-processing steps below are more efficient and organized and less time-consuming than ever before:

- ◆ On arrival at the SPC, agents ensure the detainee is not a minor. Minors are separated from the facility's adult population and placed in a juvenile facility.
- ◆ The detainee receives a visual examination for obvious medical problems.
- ◆ The detainee's files are established, including an immigration case file. The detainee is given a personal property sheet and medical questionnaire to complete.
- ◆ Processors collect the detainee's personal valuables and provide a receipt.
- ◆ Biometric information, including fingerprints and a photograph, is recorded using the IDENT system.
- ◆ The detainee is assigned a facility uniform: blue (noncriminal alien), orange (criminal alien), or red (aggravated felon); a personal hygiene packet containing a toothbrush, soap, and other necessities; a list of low-cost legal services; and a blank asylum application.
- ◆ Information printed by computer for each detainee includes an I-385 booking card, dormitory identification card, medical form, and I-77 personal property card.
- ◆ The bond release program is explained to the detainee.
- ◆ The rules of the facility are explained to the detainee orally or by video.
- ◆ The detainee receives a medical screening for contagious diseases at an on-site clinic and is isolated until his or her good health is confirmed. Treatment is provided if necessary.
- ◆ If the detainee receives a clean bill of health, he or she is assigned a bed at the facility.



A contract guard locks a gate at the SPC. Next to her are a criminal alien and an aggravated felon. (Photo by Mitch Katz, INS HQ Public Affairs)

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Hong Kong, as well as most Central American countries, immediate voluntary return is not always an option.

Ruiz says INS detains the aliens and ensures they are treated fairly and humanely. "It's important that all of us are aware of each person's needs," Ruiz contends. "We need to afford them every opportunity for relief that is available to them [to resolve their situation]." This includes allowing family members to visit three days a week, providing detainees with access to legal representation, running a well-stocked library, and providing vegetarian and religious-preference meals when requested. Detainees' recreation includes basket-

ball, soccer, track, and movies in both English and Spanish.

Port Isabel's health services division is housed in a small, nearly windowless concrete building behind three barbed-wire fences. The division employs a physician, physician's assistant, nurse, and pharmacist to provide initial detainee examinations and immediate medical treatment or referral to a specialist. The facility's detainees make thousands of clinic visits each month.

**The District's Ports of Entry.** Aside from running the Port Isabel SPC, one of the Harlingen district's main responsibilities is managing the Rio Grande Valley's POEs from Brownsville at the southern tip of Texas to



Dr. Lucyciminda Paredo-Berger and Registered Nurse Denise Williams make up half the staff of the Port Isabel SPC's medical clinic.

Falcon Lake, more than 100 miles to the east. Four area port directors handle the traffic and supervise more than 200 Inspections personnel.

Among the busiest is David Moreno at the



The Hidalgo POE, seen here from a McAllen sector AirOps Cessna, is one of the busiest land ports of entry on the southwest border. (Photo by Mitch Katz, INS HQ Public Affairs)

Pharr International Bridge. A 15-year INS veteran, Moreno has been stationed at Pharr since it opened in April 1996 and has been a port director for nearly five years. Before that, he worked at the Hidalgo POE, the fourth busiest port in the United States with two million crossings per month. That port is now under his supervision, as are the McAllen Airport gateway, Pharr, and the Los Ebanos POE to the west, the last Rio Grande crossing still using a hand-pulled ferry.

Moreno says the Pharr POE "is not what you would consider a very busy port" with tourist traffic, but the number of commercial vehicles crossing the border on the international bridge has quadrupled over the past year, from 6,000 per month in FY96 to 26,000 per month in FY97. "There's been a constant increase every year at this port," Moreno says. "It's steady

truck traffic, and the lines can get long, especially during the holidays."

Because Pharr is relatively remote and has only four traffic lanes, it likely will never rival the 12-lane Hidalgo POE; however, the commercial vehicle backup sometimes can reach more than halfway across the 3.2-mile bridge, the longest between the United States and Mexico. The port is more than 1.5 miles from the Rio Grande, and pedestrian traffic is prohibited; nevertheless, sometimes people are dropped off in Mexico and attempt to walk across.

"At these ports, we're enforcing the laws related to 30 difference agencies, and we have to do it in a matter of seconds," Moreno continues. "There's always something coming up and we're always dealing with different situations. When you're working with more than two million people a month, there's never a dull moment." He adds, "We're enforcement-minded, but we're also a service provider." Examples of this, he says, include issuing border crossing cards at the Hidalgo POE for frequent travellers between Mexico and the United States and providing and accepting various INS forms.

To ensure public satisfaction with these services, Moreno and his staff meet regularly with members of local community-based organizations (CBOs). "In the past few years, the Immigration Service has become more public-focused," he says. "To us that means we're always on

the phone talking with [the CBOs] about problems they might have. We also meet regularly through bridge/port meetings. We want to settle the problems locally instead having them send a letter to their congressman."



Moreno and his staff work hand-in-hand with the POE Customs Service to manage an ever-increasing traffic flow.

The new immigration law passed last year has added more work. "We're way up there on expedited removals," Moreno says, referring to the new authority immigration inspectors have regarding aliens attempting entry with fraudulent or no documents. In April and May of this year, the four ports he supervises processed approximately 370 expedited removal cases.

"At first, of course, as with any new program, the officers were hesitant," he says, "but after they got comfortable with it—it was no problem. Our inspectors have been doing a fantastic job and they should be commended."

Immigration Inspector Ernesto Tagle inspects the border-crossing card of a Mexican national at the Pharr POE.



Area Port Director David Moreno

## Houston IHP Conference

### DRAWS OVER 100 EMPLOYEES

By **Rodney Guliford, HQ Office of Investigations**

INS' second annual Institutional Hearing Program (IHP) conference, held June 2 through 4 in Houston, TX, attracted 104 employees.

Richard Cravener, acting Houston district office director, opened the conference. Lydia St. John-Mellado, national coordinator of INS' IHP efforts and Criminal Alien branch director of the Headquarters Office of Investigations, presented the conference agenda.

INS specialists made presentations on expansion of the IHP, administrative deportation, judicial and stipulated orders, impact of the new immigration law on IHP, video hearings in IHP, and form flow applications. Presenters on these topics included: Larry Weinig, HQ Office of Programs; Michael

Conricode, Central Region assistant counsel; Jim Reynolds, Dallas district counsel; John Duck, Immigration Judge from the Service's Oakdale facility; Isabelle Chewning, HQ Office of Detention and Deportation; and Bertha Reed, HQ Office of Information Resource Management.

Small-group workshops covered the Deportable Alien Control System (DACS) and training issues; IHP hearings conducted by judges; the Automated Nationwide System for Immigration Review (ANSIR) and its effects on IHP scheduling; and improving productivity within the IHP. INS presenters and panel members included Ann Fenton, MIA-DDP; Bertha Reed; John Duck; Michael Conricode; Bill Kummings, HQ-COU;

Lydia St. John-Mellado; Marco Garcia, CRO-INV; Lynn Hunt, ERO-INV; Valerie Mincheff, WRO-INV; Stephen Munroe, ERO-INV, and David Talley, WRO-DDP.

Two plenary sessions included the Arizona IHP Workflow Analysis and the Texas Bureau of Prisons IHP. Presenters were Ron Dodson, HQ Office of Investigations, and Cathy McVey, Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Awards were presented to the Arizona IHP; Texas State IHP; Big Spring, TX, Federal IHP; and Boston County IHP to recognize increased productivity and initiative demonstrated in FY 1996 and 1997.

Conferees also toured the Service's Huntsville, TX, IHP facility housing the state's 11,000 incarcerated criminal aliens.



Attending the closing dinner during Naturalization Quality Procedures training in Jekyll Island, GA, earlier this summer were: Mary Ellen Elwood, Headquarters; Lisa Gillespie, Los Angeles, CA, district; Rudy Neira, San Antonio, TX, district; Mary Ann Gantner, New York, NY, district; Jennifer Sava, New Orleans, LA, district; Marie Wollin, CA SPC; Sharon Hudson, Dallas, TX, district; Sherry Bubb, Boise, ID, district; Jane Nobles, Houston, TX, district; Dick Sheridan, Headquarters; Danielle Sheahan, New York, NY, district; Judy Ferguson, Charlotte, NC; Rosetta Martini, Boston, MA, district; Mary Alice Khachikian, Brooklyn, NY; Many Gomez, El Monte, CA; and Chris Henfling, El Paso, TX. (Photo by Fay Adler, Honolulu, HI, district)

## Expedited Removal Topic at Migration Conference

Implementing the expedited removal provisions of the '96 Act has at times been a challenge, Phyllis Coven, director of the Service's Office of International Affairs, told the audience at a joint United States/European Union (EU) conference on international migration held in early June on South Padre Island, TX. She added that INS had made the transition as smoothly as possible, while ensuring the human rights of those going through the process.

Explaining the structure of the expedited removal process, Coven called the new mandate "one of the biggest challenges and one of our greatest balancing acts." The INS "recognizes the obligation of the United States to protect those individuals fleeing persecution," she said, but this must be balanced with a process allowing the Service to determine whether each individual has a credible fear of such persecution. This credible-fear determination has become one key to the statutory enforcement of the new process.

Coven also stressed the United States' and INS' commitment to ensuring the rights of all individuals arriving at a port of entry with fraudulent or no documents who then enter the expedited removal process. She said that all hearings with immigration officers are held at detention centers rather than immediately upon arrival at the port of entry, and that all individuals are told they have a right to consult with someone of their choosing during the process.

The two-day conference was the second in a series focusing on international migration issues; the first was held last year in Dublin,

Ireland. Representatives from 13 countries attended. Seminars focused on the United States' and EU nations' immigration and asylum policies, maritime interdiction, international cooperation, and other issues of concern. Conferees also visited the Port Isabel Service Processing Center and toured a U.S. Coast Guard cutter used for migrant interdiction.



Members of delegations from 13 countries and the European Union attended the conference on international migration in June on South Padre Island, TX.

Representing INS at the conference along with Coven were Robert Bach, executive associate commissioner for Policy and Planning, Assistant Chief J. William Carter, U.S. Border Patrol, and Associate General Counsel Kelly Ryan.

## RESTRUCTURE

*Continued from page 2*

oversight of field activities, facilitate field/Headquarters communication, and support field offices' needs." The overall goal, she said, is to "provide the critical tools required to implement actions as close to the front line as possible."

"Clearly INS is demonstrating that we can perform and that the organizational changes we made in 1994 constituted a strong foundation for the successes we have achieved," the Commissioner told Service field directors and senior Headquarters' managers during a meeting in mid-April. "Nonetheless, it is clear from internal feedback, daily experience, and work done by

outside experts, that our reforms must go further if we are to improve accountability, performance, and professionalism."

*(Editor's note: Further details of the proposed reorganization, released on July 11 as this issue was being prepared, will be reported once Congressional approval is received.)*

## Port Everglades Showcases

### NEW OFFICE AND TECHNOLOGY

An ambitious expansion of the Port Everglades (PEV), FL, port of entry, has increased the former 2,100 square-foot office to a modernized 7,000 square-foot complex with new private offices for the area port director, deputy port director, and other supervisors.

The expanded facility includes locker rooms with showers, breakroom, resource library, a Training and Intelligence office, an armory, and a conference room. The renovation included new office furniture and the acquisition of three new Ford Aerostar extended minivans and a dozen state-of-the-art Motorola

hand-held radios. The new office was inaugurated May 1.

PEV will serve as a test site for the Service's new Windows 95-based computer system. It also will be the first seaport in the United States to use its own gateway for direct access to IBIS, TECS, and INSMENU. The airport local area network was upgraded to communicate directly with the network at the seaport.

This is not the first time PEV has served as a test site for Service technology. In 1995 it tested the Service's experimental Portable Automated Lookout System (PALS), a CD-ROM-based laptop for

inspectors' use during maritime inspections.

The 31 members of PEV's staff and management are responsible for all inspections activities in the Fort Lauderdale metropolitan area, including Port Everglades and surrounding marinas, Fort Lauderdale International Airport, General Aviation Facility, and Executive Airport. Last year PEV Inspections processed 2.5 million passengers and crew. The latest statistics show a 10-percent increase in international traffic for the current season. One morning last December, a record 14 cruise ships tied down at Port Everglades.

### Operation Restore Frees More Than 7,000 Jobs for Legal Workers

INS' Phoenix, AZ, district office concluded its second phase of a worksite enforcement initiative, Operation Restore, with the arrests of 631 undocumented workers. More than 7,000 arrests of illegal workers were made over the six-month effort, which concluded in June.

With wages from the freed-up jobs ranging from \$4.75 to \$12 per hour, the entire initiative could lead to \$65 million in wages being returned to legal Arizona workers. In all, the operation uncovered more than 6,500 instances where individual workers used fraudulent documents to obtain jobs. Another 1,200 cases revealed missing

employee documents or documents that required further review. More than 400 companies were investigated over the course of the operation.

In addition to seeking out illegal workers, Operation Restore also focused on educating employers about the rules regarding hiring, and helped employers fill jobs vacated by apprehended illegal employees. More than 160 area companies participated in educational seminars sponsored by the district.

"Our aim with Operation Restore was two-fold," Phoenix District Director Roseanne Sonchick said when the final results were announced in early July. "To

remove illegal aliens from the workplace and to provide employers with the tools they need to comply with the law. It's clear that we succeeded on both fronts."

Along with the action taken against the illegal workers, Service investigators are looking into whether any of the companies involved knowingly hired undocumented employees. The penalty for knowingly hiring such a worker ranges from \$250 to \$10,000 for each violation. During the first phase of the operation, concluded earlier this year, fines were issued against eight Phoenix-area employers.

## Chicago District Turns 100 with Largest Citizenship Ceremony in Nation

Capping off a day-long celebration of the office's 100th anniversary, INS' Chicago district swore in over 8,400 new citizens at the United Center July 1 in what was to date the largest single citizenship ceremony of the year.

According to the office's public affairs director Gail Montenegro, individuals from 120 different countries became citizens, with 40 percent coming from Mexico, 13 percent from Poland, and seven percent from India. The oldest citizen naturalized was a 101-year-old woman who came to the United States from her native Poland over 20 years ago.

"Being an American is not just about sharing a land," said Commissioner Meissner, who attended the 100th anniversary celebration and citizenship ceremony. "One of the most important things we can share as a nation is citizenship. At a time when we are becoming increasingly diverse, citizenship unites us in a common venture."

The Commissioner was joined at the ceremony by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, whose Citizenship Advisory Council has worked with INS since 1994 to help coordinate the naturalization activities of various local organizations. "Our

city was born of immigrants," the Mayor told the thousands of people standing on Michael Jordan's home court. "And to this day, immigrants and new citizens continue to play a key role in moving Chicago forward."

Other events held to celebrate the office's 100th anniversary included a reception at the city's Union League Club, where the guest of honor was Mabel Platt, a district employee with 62 years of government service, 58 of which she has worked at INS. In addition, the Commissioner personally congratulated the members of the district office

during a 'town meeting', met with senior managers, and observed and met with Immigration Inspectors at O'Hare International Airport.



## Attorney General Visits San Diego Border Patrol

*By Janna Evans, San Diego Sector Public Affairs*

Attorney General Janet Reno expressed pride in the courage and determination of the San Diego sector Border Patrol agents during a recent visit, her seventeenth to the sector. Speaking to more than 100 agents shortly after sunrise on June 20, the Attorney General said they have shown remarkable courage in the wake of several shooting inci-

dents, and extended her sympathies to the family and friends of Stephen Starch, the El Cajon agent killed in a fall June 14 (see page 20). She also congratulated the agents on the success of Operation Gatekeeper, noting the difference the agents' hard work has made.

The Attorney General said the sector's agents will continue to maintain a high-profile presence to further secure the border, emphasizing

that officer safety remains her highest priority. Accordingly, she asked agents for their thoughts and recommendations. Responses included the need for reasonably priced, well made, comfortable body armor and long-range fire power. Following the meeting, the Attorney General toured the border to see first-hand where the recent shooting incidents occurred and to speak with agents on the line.

*Correction: In the July issue of the INS Communiqué, Border Patrol Agent Robert Harris' office was misidentified. He is with the Headquarters Office of Intelligence.*

# News Briefs

## San Antonio Worksite Operation Nets 321 Apprehensions

An operation in the Austin, TX, area by the San Antonio district's Worksite Enforcement Unit with support from the Detention and Deportation Branch led to the apprehension of 321 unauthorized work-

ers in five days. More than 300 of the aliens arrested during the June 16-20 operation were returned voluntarily to Mexico the day they were apprehended.

## Commuter Lane Opens at San Clemente

For the first time in its 60-year history, the San Clemente, CA, Border Patrol checkpoint has an access lane specifically for pre-enrolled commuters.

According to Bob Gilbert, the sector's public information officer, the checkpoint is the busiest of the more than 20 operated by the Border Patrol nationwide. More than 5,000 people have signed up for the program since April.

"The pre-enrolled access lane (PAL) shows how we can use innovation to balance the Border Patrol's law enforcement responsibilities with the public's desire for better service," Sector Chief Johnny Williams said. He added that the prescreening process allows INS to focus attention on higher-risk travelers.

## Torch Run Raises over \$7,000 for DC Special Olympics

Joining 2,000 local runners in early June, INS Headquarters employees participated in the Washington, DC, Special Olympics Torch Run for the twelfth straight year, raising \$7,200 through the sale of event t-shirts. The two-mile run stretches from the U.S. Capitol to East Potomac Park and the

Lincoln Memorial. Second only to the U.S. Customs Service in total funds raised this year among the 60 Federal and local agency participants, the INS program was successful due largely to the work of Lisa Tremblay, HQ FIN, and Sandy Lutkenhouse, HQ MGB.

## El Paso Team Rescues Two Lost Hikers


Members of the El Paso, TX, Border Patrol sector's Search, Trauma, and Rescue Team rappelled down the side of a cliff to save the lives of two hikers stranded in the mountains near Las Cruces, NM, in mid-June.

Sector spokesman Doug Mosier said a 13-year-old boy was stranded on a 40-foot-high ledge after being separated from the group of 20 hikers he was traveling with. A 28-year-old youth minister was also stranded on the ledge when he attempted to rescue the boy. The rescue, which took six hours, required team members to rappel

down the cliff, then lower the stranded hikers to safety.

"We're just thankful we could assist our fellow search and rescue teams during this crisis, and are happy we got to the victims in time," Acting Team Commander Manuel Cruz said. Both hikers were treated on the scene for heat exposure, and the youth was taken to a local hospital.

The rescue came just weeks after the team, with the assistance of response units from other local agencies, helped rescue three people in New Mexico's Gila National Forest.



Sandy Lutkenhouse, HQ MGB, poses with the 'Shooting Star' Award, recognizing INS' participation in the 1997 Law Enforcement Torch Run. (Photo by Joe Mancias, HQ OPA)

## The Laredo Canine Unit: An INS Success Story

Belgian Malinois is not a breed of dog familiar to everyone, but when it comes to drug runners and alien smugglers, now they know the breed as the mainstay of INS' K-9 unit nationwide. The breed's extreme versatility and adaptability to varying heat and humidity make it especially valuable along the United States' southwest border.

Nowhere has the success of these dogs and their units been more evident than in the Laredo, TX, sector, where Malinois and other dogs were instrumental in the seizure of \$38.7 million worth of narcotics and more than \$144,000 in cash during 1996. The dogs, trained to detect the four basic odors of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and people, also led their handlers to 7,333 concealed illegal immigrants attempting to enter the country during the year.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Laredo K-9 program, started as a pilot program with two Malinois from the Global Training Academy near San Antonio.

Mike Herrera III, the sector's public affairs officer, said the presence of the dogs

is as much a deterrent to would-be smugglers of aliens and illegal narcotics as is their effectiveness in direct investigations. For this reason, Herrera said, the Laredo staff is designing a system to provide K-9 kennels at the sector's checkpoints, thus eliminating the need to transport the dogs to checkpoints and ensuring they are provided with a safe, secure living environment.

The sector's 20 working K-9 teams are used as part of Laredo's war on drugs and they participate extensively in school presentations. Such hands-on involvement helps increase the community support for the units.

Specially skilled handlers and agents, including BPA Steve Williams, BPA Bennett Elliott, BPA Ruben Banda, and BPA Fernando Vasquez, have received commendations from external agencies including the International Association of Narcotics Officers and the Canine Instructors Class.

Mike Herrera III, Laredo sector public affairs officer, contributed to this story.



Members of the Border Patrol's Laredo sector K-9 unit stand with their dogs near headquarters.

## Five INS Employees Recognized with

### ATTORNEY GENERAL'S AWARDS

Five INS employees received Attorney General's awards and praise during the 45th annual Department of Justice ceremony. "You are some of the finest, most dedicated people I know," Attorney General Janet Reno said in her remarks to the award recipients. "You all serve an important role in making sure that we are carrying out our mission. You have gone to great lengths for the safety and well-being of this nation. You do this country proud."

The INS recipients were among 125 Department of Justice staff who received awards June 13 at the ceremony held in the Andrew Mellon Auditorium in Washington, DC.

**Paul Virtue**, INS' principal deputy general counsel and current acting executive associate commissioner for Programs, received the Distinguished Service Award, the second highest



Paul Virtue, INS' acting executive associate commissioner for Programs, stands with his Distinguished Service Award, the second highest Attorney General's commendation. (Photo by Mitch Katz, HQ Public Affairs)

AG commendation given this year. Recognized for his "extensive and highly professional work on immigration reform legislation from 1994 to 1997," Virtue has been the Service's main contact for communicating information about the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 to the public, media, and INS' 26,000 employees through video-conferencing and other methods.

**Diedre D. Gordon** and **Keith Kolovich**, special agents in the Service's New York field office, received the Distinguished Service Award for their part in a multiagency task force that successfully prosecuted members of the Fukinese Flying Dragons, a violent gang involved in alien smuggling, kidnapping, extortion, drug trafficking, and murder. The task force's work led to the indictment of 150 gang members.

**Isaias Lopez Jr.**, a criminal investigator in the Swanton, VT, sector's anti-smuggling unit, received the Attorney General's Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement for his "extensive knowledge of the maritime smuggling of inadmissible aliens from the People's Republic of China that have resulted in the interdiction of smuggling vessels on the east and west coasts."

**Robert M. Lewandowski**, general attorney in the Laredo sector, received a new award, Outstanding

Contributions by a New Employee. As sector counsel, Lewandowski, described as an "indefatigable resource as a teacher, litigator, and advisor," was instrumental in prosecuting *United States v. Dominquez*, the largest civil fraud case in the history of the INS.

"This is an agency where enormous amounts of work are done and a tremendous amount of effort put out every day on behalf of



Keith Kolovich and Diedre D. Gordon, both special agents in the Service's New York field office, received the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award.

people," Commissioner Meissner said at a Headquarters luncheon before the awards ceremony. "This is one way to put a human face on that effort. I could not be more delighted to have you here to thank you for the tremendous work you have done for INS."

For their part, INS' award recipients said they were just doing their jobs and each felt lucky not only to be nominated, but to win an AG award this year.

Virtue, constantly in the INS spotlight, noted the challenges that he faces every day. "It's a great tribute...to be recognized for work I truly enjoy doing," he said. "It's definitely more challenging now with the changes the new law brings. Because these issues are of general interest to the public, there is a higher degree of scrutiny. But that is something we've grown used to as well."

Lewandowski, an INS employee for only the past year-and-a-half, said about his experience with the Service: "It's been great working in Laredo. They're really good people to work with, and the variety of work is there. It's not just immigration work, but work with the DEA, FBI, and U.S. Attorney's office as well." Winning the AG

award the first time it was offered, he said, "shows that the sector counsel program is worthwhile."

Lopez thanked his co-workers and supervisor for their contributions to his work at INS, calling Mirna D. Perez, Mike Comfort, and Robert Murray the "driving forces" behind his success.

The Attorney General summed up the contributions that the INS award recipients and all Department of Justice workers make every day. Saying that "nothing can be more rewarding" than public service, Reno noted that in addition to those recognized by AG awards this year, DOJ employees spent more than 143,000 hours in 1996 performing community service and other volunteer work outside of their official capacities.

## **El Paso Sector Wins IACP Civil Rights Award**

The International Association of Chiefs of Police has awarded the 1997 Civil Rights Award in Law Enforcement to the El Paso, TX, Border Patrol sector.

The association's president Darrell L. Sanders, said "the most significant contribution that any law enforcement agency can make to ensuring positive police-community relations is to recognize human rights and cultural diversity as inherent aspects of a community's vitality."

The sector, headed by Chief Patrol Agent William T. Veal, was selected for the award "as a law enforcement organization that demonstrates exemplary performance in the investigation and/or prevention of civil rights crimes, the enforcement of civil rights statutes, and education efforts regarding civil rights issues." According to Sanders, the sector's dedication and commitment to the ideals of professional law enforcement and its recognition of the responsibility to be responsive to the community provided the basis for the selection decision.

The award will be formally presented in October during the IACP's annual conference in Orlando, FL.



Robert M. Lewandowski, Laredo sector general attorney, received the Attorney General's new award for Outstanding Contributions by a New Employee.

## People on the Move



Steven J. Farquharson

### At Headquarters:

**Victor Cerda** was named special assistant to the Chief of Staff, effective July 28. Formerly an assistant district counsel in the New York, NY, district office, Cerda began his career with the Service in 1995 as a trial attorney in New York. In 1996 he was selected head of the district's motions unit.

### In the Field:

**Steven J. Farquharson**, previously deputy district director in Boston, MA, has been named district director. Farquharson has more than 20 years of INS experience. He began his career as a Border Patrol agent in the El Centro, CA, sector, where he became a supervisor in 1983. He worked as a supervisory immigration inspector in Boston before being named assistant officer-in-charge of the Providence, RI, suboffice in 1986. Moving back to the district office in 1987, he became the assistant district director, Examinations, and was again the OIC in the Providence sub-

office from 1995 until becoming the deputy district director.

**Donald M. Whitney**, district director in Helena, MT, since November 1990, has retired after more than 25 years with INS. He began his career as a special agent in Newark, NJ, in 1972 and held special agent jobs in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, and New York, NY, before moving to Headquarters in 1978. He was deputy assistant commissioner for special investigations for four years. He became Salt Lake City, UT, officer in charge in 1982, then returned to St. Croix as officer in charge in 1983. Before moving to Helena in 1990, he was a regional antimuggling officer and then assistant regional commissioner for Detention and Deportation in Minneapolis, MN, officer in charge in Seoul, Korea, and worked for INTERPOL, the international criminal police organization, in Washington, DC.

He plans to use his background in criminal justice and business by opening a private investigations, security, and consulting business in Helena.



Donald M. Whitney

## In Memoriam:

Border Patrol Agent **Stephen C. Starch** was killed in mid-June after falling into a ravine in rough terrain while tracking suspected illegal aliens on the California border in the El Centro sector. A graduate of training class 295 at the Border Patrol Academy, the 25-year-old agent was stationed at El Cajon the past year-and-a-half. A graduate of Texas Tech University, Agent Starch was an avid outdoorsman who loved to hunt and fish. He was nominated by his station for Agent of the Month in May for helping to save the lives of two acci-

dent victims he discovered trapped in an overturned burning truck.

Extremely well-liked and respected by his fellow agents, Agent Starch was



BP agent Stephen C. Starch

known for his polite and respectful nature, according to Darryl Griffen, patrol agent in charge of the El Cajon station. His mood was upbeat and contagious, often lifting the spirits of those around him. During his time in El Cajon, he performed all of his assigned duties in an exemplary manner, while continually displaying a positive work ethic that served as an example to his peers.

Attorney General Reno and Commissioner Meissner attended Agent Starch's funeral, held June 18 in Lubbock, TX.

## Communi<sup>INS</sup>que

The *INS Communique* is published by the Headquarters Office of Public Affairs to inform employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service about official and unofficial activities. Readers are invited to submit articles, photographs, and letters to the editor. Write to INS Public Affairs, Washington, DC 20536; or ☎ (202) 514-2648.

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*Commissioner*

Joseph Mancias, Jr.  
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Richard Kenney  
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Mitch Katz  
*Associate Editor*

**Cover:** Members of the McAllen, TX, Border Patrol sector's air operations unit are shown on a background aerial shot of the Brownsville port of entry. Clockwise from top left: Instructor Pilot Rogelio Martinez and Pilot Candidate Gus Gonzales (front) prepare for take off in one of the sector's light fixed-wing aircraft; Pilot Candidate Gus Gonzales checks part of a plane's wing at McAllen Airport; Aircraft Pilot Sal Contini adjusts his infrared goggles; and Aircraft Pilot Chuck Akeroyd adjusts the tail rotor of one of the unit's four OH6 helicopters. (Photos for INS by Bill Powers)